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THE LIBERAL PREACHERS OF AMERICA OUT OF THE PULPIT.

VIII.

EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE.

BY CYRUS A. BARTOL.

Dear UNITY, with its lovely, winsome name, asks me to try my hand on another of the "Liberal Preachers out of the Pulpit." I judge there is but little illiberal preaching save in that place, by men of any denomination or name. For the old, hard dogmas, you must call at the office; they are to be had nowhere else. From the desk of the lyceum, from the editorial chair, in the contributor's article, in the newspaper column or in the magazine, on the orator's platform or the stump, they have neither sign nor sound. Total depravity, arbitrary election, vicarious atonement, triune deity, everlasting doom, must be hunted up in the old records and documents. They show but a thin, ghostly, infrequent appearance even in church in these days. If reaffirmed, it is but technically and occasionally as *tenets*, things held by the will in loyalty to an antique creed, with evident consciousness there is no "music for the future" in them, if ever indeed such things could be fairly sung. The ancient articles are once in a while nailed to the temple-gates in a special discourse, as dead hawks and foxes by farmers were to barn-doors for scare-crows; but they no longer live in the faith of any reason or custom of men's use. When my noble-hearted friend, Dr. Lorimer, was interviewed on the subject of everlasting punishment, he answered the reporter, "*Sir, a dreary doctrine!*" When my other excellent brother, Murray, in Dr. Griffin's Park Street Church in Boston, which went formerly by name of "*Brimstone Corner*," charmed the congregation he has left, how "broad and liberal as the casing air" were most of his sermons, full of the breath of the Adirondacks, and catholic as by a zeal for education and temperance they could be made! I doubt not even the buck-board wagons he is now busy on will be fashioned by the "Golden Rule;" and so we will give them this little advertisement without charge.

But my first step is a digression. Certainly there is no more signal example of liberality than Mr. Whipple. If I have shied up to my subject, put it, O Editor, to the account of an almost invincible reluctance to speak in public of a living friend, customary as it has, I think somewhat unhappily, become to have the biography and epitaph before the funeral. But, when I hinted my embarrassment to Mr. Whipple himself, he offered to relieve me by committing suicide, which would secure my paper at a very extravagant price. So that, although I have no right or business to portray him save in his willingness to be in my hands, I must venture in a few touches a free handling of his claims. His homilies are literary criticisms, beside which this country has produced none more kindly or acute. Reading his pages we feel he has done the work for America which Ste. Beuve did for France. No scales at the bank, shop or hay-market are more important than the balance of a true criticism to weigh the books which issue so fast from the restless modern press. No men have occupied this province with a more genial spirit and generous fidelity than George Ripley, of the New York *Tribune*,—a man of such equity in his wide survey no reader could learn from his scholarly judgments he had ever belonged to a particular order in the ministry,—and Edwin P. Whipple, who would scarce have missed his vocation had he been ordained with the laying on of clerical hands. Dispassionateness, disinterestedness and justice mark all his estimates. To overrate or undervalue any performance or trait in an author were to him a blunder he could not distinguish from a crime. Books to him are people healthy or diseased; and no physician has a surer diagnosis to tell what is the matter with his patient. He feels a veritable pulse in the cold paper and dry ink, and traces the sentences back to jets in the vital circulations whence they sprang. They are cipher despatches, let me change the figure to say, whose meaning it would not be easy to hide from the first glance of his keen and practised eye. There is such a fatality of correctness in his decision, that a body might as well disown the inches of its ascertained girth, or a tree

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repudiate the mark of its trunk on the tape-line, as a writer complain that his qualities had by this inspector been misunderstood. He paints the painters in this field of the great art of letters. How the figures of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and a score besides, shine on his canvas with a likeness none can deny; and however our taste and temperament, color or shade, our differing opinions of what we peruse, we always observe Mr. Whipple's reason for his own view, and that he neither "extenuates nor sets down aught in malice." He deals not in flattery, and malice is as far from his benign temper as that outward hell which God's creation has not yet disclosed. If it be a man of action, like Washington, he undertakes to represent, the lines are no less firm and true. If it be a friend, like Thomas Starr King, his love only introduces him deeper into his theme, without making his brush tremble, and we have what the artists call *an interior*. If the authors, whom he seeks to set before us, are foreign or of a former age,—Bacon, Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth,—he is never below his task. He adds deduction to induction, synthesis to analysis, and we have not skeletons but live forms in the sphere of our survey. Much of Mr. Whipple's best work is still in manuscript; but in what we have in print not a single case of narrowness, indecency, prejudice or unfairness can be found. In the deluge of commentary, lacking perception and discrimination, and among the many verdicts deformed by unprincipled favor or more contemptible hate, decrees of pompous tribunals, yet not rising above the dignity of "tricks of the trade," the fightings and manœuvres only transformed from the sword and battle-field to the arena of quills and tongues, it is a pleasure to contemplate a bar so modest and unpretending, while so conscientious and unswayed. It must be confessed, Mr. Whipple is more happy and at home in praise than in blame. He is no Rhadamanthus. To censure others' performance or conduct goes rather against his heart. Were he the *Charon*, he would gladly ferry all the souls over into bliss, not to the infernal regions. He chooses such as deserve the celestial good fortune, spite of earthly fault. Sumner, Agassiz, Motley, Webster, Choate, are coming out even now brilliant from his great loom.

Dear UNITY, if my piece be not so long as the samples sent me of my predecessors, remember I have not eked it out with quotations, which would indeed have been better than my own poor weft; also that I am spent with work.

THE GROWTH OF DOCTRINE; OR, THE OLD-NEW CREED.

VIII.

CONVERSION.

J. T. SUNDERLAND.

Do religious Liberals believe in Conversion?

If by conversion we are to understand the commonly accepted orthodox doctrine of conversion, then I must answer, No! They recognize in its texture some fibers of truth,—important fibers,—but that theological doctrine as a whole they certainly do not believe to be true.

There *is* a doctrine of conversion, however, which is accepted and earnestly taught by Liberals; a doctrine, moreover, which they believe to accord far better with the original meaning of the word conversion, with the teachings of the New Testament, and with the facts of human experience, than the orthodox doctrine does.

So that, to the question, Do Liberals believe in Conversion? no answer of any value at all can be made without having an understanding beforehand what is meant by conversion. If by conversion we are to mean one thing, then "No, Liberals do not believe in it." If we are to mean another, then "Yes, they do believe in it."

The idea of conversion which is most widely prevalent is doubtless that of orthodoxy. Use the word, and probably ninety-nine persons in a hundred of those who hear it will think at once of the orthodox doctrine. In attempting, therefore, to set forth the Liberal thought upon the subject, it will probably be best to make our start by somewhat carefully examining the orthodox doctrine with a view to discovering what of truth and what of error there is in that doctrine, and what of good and what of harm result from it practically in society. Shall we undertake such an examination, looking first for the truth and the good results, and later for the error and the evil results?

Before proceeding, however, it will be important to get a careful statement of what the orthodox doctrine is. Perhaps as high orthodox authorities as we have, define the doctrine thus:

"Conversion is that change in the thoughts, desires, disposition and life of the sinner, which is brought about when the Holy Ghost enters the heart as the result of the exercise of a saving faith in the atonement, by which the sinner is justified. The process by which this great change is effected is this: The sinner is convinced of sin by the

Holy Spirit; he exercises a penitent faith in Christ as his Savior; God immediately justifies him; the Holy Spirit attests to the penitent the fact of his pardon, and instantly sheds abroad the love of God in his heart, when all things become new."

With this definition of the doctrine, we may proceed to our examination.

I. As perhaps on the whole *favorable* to the orthodox doctrine of Conversion, as above defined, the following points are to be noted:

1. The doctrine contains clearly a recognition—a bungling recognition it is true, but yet a recognition—of the fact *that human life*, as a whole, is *not what it ought to be, not what it may be.* Men are not perfect. The best should rise to still higher things. The doctrine in its way summons human beings to the better life of duty, of purity, of truth, of faith, of hope, of love, of worship, of consecration to the ideal. True, it puts its summons in a form which smacks of cant; a form which tells that the doctrine had its origin in an age much more ignorant of human nature than our age; a form which implies the truth of a whole system of theology which the best intelligence of our day is gradually letting go of. Nevertheless, the summons is one, on the whole, upward. The doctrine clearly recognizes the reality of human sin, and the need there is that men should struggle to overcome appetite and passion, to rise out of the mere animal into the intellectual and spiritual, to cease to be breakers of laws and hence sinners against God, and become keepers of laws and hence children of God. In so far, then, the doctrine clearly has in it truth; and so far as it is true, of course its influence must be good in society.

2. Again, the doctrine evidently stands, in its own way, for the important truth that *religion is a matter of experience—a thing of the deepest life.* The lamentable tendency everywhere exists, and always had existed, for men to make religion a shallow thing, an external thing, a thing of mere forms, ceremonies and rites. The doctrine of conversion strikes with one blow down through all possible externalities, and says: "These are husks; these of themselves are nothing. Religion is an affair of the heart; a matter between a man and his own conscience; the deepest and most earnest experience of the human soul." I am sure that any one who will take the pains to penetrate down into the heart of the doctrine of conversion as taught by the orthodox churches to-day, will find there a nucleus of this deep and important truth.

3. Again, the doctrine evidently stands, after a fashion, for the important thought that *moral reformation is to be accomplished not by compromising with evil, but by unreservedly and wholly giving it up.* Men are forever deceiving themselves with the idea of an easy-going, half-and-half reformation,—a reformation which gently corrects, when things get too bad; which lops off the ends of the branches when the tree of evil habit or passion gets too large. It is a fatal delusion. The doctrine of conversion lays a hand upon men's shoulders and says: You can't reform in that way. Reformation to be worth anything must be radical. You cannot serve God and Mammon. If the Lord be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him. But you can't serve both. When a man finds he has an evil in him, he must give it up. To stop short of that is, as a rule, to accomplish nothing. It is folly to keep looking for grapes on bramble bushes because you have trimmed down the bushes a little, or figs on thistles because you have gently pruned the thistles. The evil thing must be rooted up, and good planted in its place. I think the orthodox doctrine of conversion, in its own way, stands stoutly for this important truth.

4. Again, the doctrine teaches an important lesson by putting such stress as it does upon *immediateness* in every good undertaking. It puts a grand emphasis upon the *now* of life. It rings in men's ears as nothing else does: "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. Fools say to-morrow; wise men say to-day. To put off any good work until to-morrow is not to begin it at all."

5. Once more, the doctrine puts needed emphasis upon the *will* element in all reform. Men never *happen* to cease being bad men and to become good. They must determine; they must resolve; they must say, "I will." Drifting is always down stream, never up. The initial thing, and more than anything else the essential thing, in every upward step, or any progress from the base toward the noble, from the animal toward the spiritual, is a determination. In an important sense, to will is to be saved, while to vacillate and let things go, is to be lost. I think the orthodox doctrine of conversion is, in its own way, a grand teacher, in all our communities, of that lesson.

6. Finally, the doctrine is doubtless right in reference *to some persons* (but as clearly wrong with reference to others), in insisting upon *one supreme change in human life*—one crisis experience upon which all the highest interests of the human being turns. Into here and there a life, such a crisis unquestionably comes. The conversion of St. Paul was doubtless such a crisis. Jesus seems to have passed

through such an experience, just before the beginning of his public ministry—a shadowy record of the same being preserved to us in the story of the Temptation in the Wilderness. Just so as we look about us in society to-day, we see some lives completely changed by the coming in of some fresh impulse or some newly-awakened purpose. It may be a boy who is idle and a truant, always shirking lessons and work until everybody predicts for him a useless and criminal life. But at last he comes into contact with a teacher who finds his heart, wins his admiration and love, inspires him with a noble ambition. From that time he is changed. He becomes diligent at his books, and determines, perhaps for his teacher's sake, to become a wise and respected man. Or, it may be a young man, with wealth and education and social position, who under the influence of evil companions gets led away into licentiousness, gambling, crime, and is on the brink of utter ruin, when, startled perhaps by the miserable death of a companion, he sees the awful gulf that is before him, and with a mighty effort into which he puts all the strength he has remaining, he renounces his wicked associates, turns to virtue, and is saved. Or, it may be a man in middle life, who for years and years has been a slave to the demon of drink, but at last, alarmed by symptoms of delirium tremens, perhaps, he signs the pledge, joins a temperance society, becomes active in temperance work, and from that time is a new man. Or, it may be a woman whose whole life has been a round of selfish, frivolous pleasure-seeking; but by and by some book like Daniel Deronda, or may be some revivalist like Mr. Moody, startles her, reveals her strangely to herself, opens to her a vision of a better life. Alone in her room she weeps and prays, and at last before God and her own conscience she dedicates herself to a different life. From her knees she rises to become a very angel of love and usefulness in society. Or, it may be a great and noble man like Garrison, who finds the crisis of his life in his chance meeting with Benjamin Lundy, from whom his heart gets set on fire with a deathless purpose to devote his life to righting the wrongs of the slave.

Thus there are some persons in our own age, and in every age, who, like Jesus and Paul of old, have their lives dominated and fashioned into something quite different from what they otherwise might have been, by one striking central experience; not necessarily indeed a religious experience, in the common meaning of that word, but a marked experience of some kind. But we must not mistake and suppose that such a history is universal or even common with human beings. It is not. While into the lives of Jesus and Paul there came conscious crisis moments and crisis experiences, as we have seen, there is no record that anything of the kind came into the lives of, for instance, any of the twelve disciples of Jesus. And just so to-day, when we turn to men and women about us, we find a few, and yet comparatively very few, to whom the conversion theory of life applies. Comparatively few can discover that their moral or spiritual history, any more than their intellectual history, turns upon any one marked and transcendant event or experience. With most persons the important choices of life have been many. The turning points in life have been many. The new inspirations which have come to them, through which they have been born into new and higher life, have not been one, but many.

Thus we see that the orthodox doctrine of conversion is a doctrine which may be made to fit in very well with the lives of a certain limited class of persons, and so far as this limited class is concerned we may speak of it as true, though not as regards any outside of this necessarily small class. Nor should we forget that such crisis experiences as the doctrine stands for, are not confined to man's strictly religious history. Indeed they are quite as common outside of the path of religion as inside, unless we make the word religion cover the whole ground of one's moral growth and experience.

II. I pass now from a consideration of the truth and the good wrapped up in the orthodox doctrine of Conversion, to a consideration of its error and evil. As on the whole unquestionably *unfavorable* to the doctrine, the following among other points are to be noted:

1. The doctrine is a *component part of a theological system, with which it stands or falls.* It is a stone of an arch; it was cut and fashioned with special reference to the arch; it stands passably firm so long as the arch is undisturbed; but if the foundation or any stone of doctrine gives way, the whole arch falls, and with the rest, of course, this doctrine of conversion. But the arch is in the worst condition possible; indeed it rests upon absolutely no foundation but assumption. Every particle of evidence of any and every kind that we have, goes to show that there was no Adam, and no "fall." The race is many times six thousand years old, and has risen to its present condition from a low beginning; not sunk to its present condition from a high beginning, like that pictured in the Eden story. Nor is there a particle of ground for believing that the second person singular of God came to this world in human form and died to make an atonement for sin, and thus establish conditions by accepting which man can escape the ruin brought on him by the "fall." Hence "conversion" or "regeneration," as the theological step whereby man accepts those imaginary conditions, secures the benefit of the imaginary atonement and escapes the ruin of the imaginary fall, of necessity comes to nothing with the collapse of the theological system of which it is a part. True, as we have seen, when we look at the doctrine as standing by itself, unconnected with any baseless "scheme of redemption," it is easy to discover some few fibers of truth intertwined with it; indeed it would be incredible that any doctrine should obtain such a hold as this doctrine has done, upon the belief of an important part of mankind, without possessing some truth. However, as a link in the chain of the theological system of orthodoxy, or as a stone in the arch of what is known as the "plan of redemption," Liberals generally assert that the doctrine is purely and wholly fictitious, and challenge proof to the contrary.

2. The orthodox doctrine of conversion *rests upon the basis of a superficial and mischievous conception of human nature and moral law.* For example, (1) it assumes that man can believe as he will, when every psychologist knows that he must believe as he can. If the evidence seems to a man to be so and so, he must believe so and so, no matter how strong his desire may be to believe the contrary. (2) It assumes that since man can believe as he will, therefore there is in belief a moral quality. The man who believes in this way is to be rewarded; the man who believes in that way is to be punished. But such a discrimination, if both men are equally honest and equally earnest in their endeavor to find out the truth, is wrong. It would be as scientific and as just to declare there is moral quality in the color of eyes, and reward one man for having gray eyes, and punish another for having blue. (3) It teaches that a rigid line runs through the world, separating mankind into saints and sinners—saved persons and lost persons—persons fit for heaven and destined for heaven, and persons fit only for hell and destined for hell. But in truth there is no such rigid law. In the nature of the case it is as impossible that there should be, as it is that there should be a rigid line drawn between cold and heat, light and darkness, dawn and day, the beautiful and the not beautiful. In fact, good and evil are largely, if not wholly, relative terms. Moreover, in every human being both are found. The best persons have in them some evil; the worst have in them some good. Human nature is a thing of degrees, and never a thing all good or all evil. (4) It teaches that a man, by a single act of the will (assisted, of course, by the Holy Spirit, but so far as the man is concerned, by a single act of the will), may pass over the fixed line in a moment's time, and from a depravity as deep as Nero's become at once a saved saint, as pure in the sight of God as Fenelon. The evident truth of the case is not that at all, but this, viz: that a man, however base, may *begin* a new and better life in a moment's time; but to reach a condition in which he may with any truth be called a saint, or in which heaven can mean much if anything to him, he must pass through long and severe years of moral discipline. He who correctly understands human nature and moral law sees that in the very nature of the case no man can be suddenly converted into heaven; heaven must grow into the man. (5) As commonly preached, particularly in revivals, it teaches that character can be transferred: one person may be guilty of wrong, and his guilt may be put upon another. One person may be good, and his goodness may be "imputed" to another. If I "lay my sins on Jesus," it is as if I had no sins. If I have faith in a Christ who is righteous, it is as if I myself were righteous. But it is marvelous that persons with any intelligence at all can believe this. No man in his right mind believes that knowledge, as for example of the science of Botany, can be transferred from one person to another by an act of faith. But cannot knowledge of Botany, or any other knowledge, be transferred as easily as moral quality? The simple fact of the case is, the declaring of one person to be righteous because he believes in the righteousness of another, does not make the first-named person one whit more righteous than he was before; it simply introduces a lie and a deception into the case.

These, then, are illustrations of what I mean when I say that the orthodox doctrine of conversion rests upon the basis of a superficial and mischievous conception of human nature and moral law.

3. The doctrine *tends to discourage virtue* in human conduct. Orthodoxy warns men continually to beware of putting their trust in good deeds. Morality is slightingly called "*mere* morality." Men are taught that all their virtue is as "filthy rags" in the sight of God, unless they are converted; but when conversion comes, all their evil deeds and crimes will be wholly and at once wiped away, no matter how black they may be. What influence must such teaching have upon unconverted people? How can it do otherwise than make them morally careless—disposed to lower the standard of their virtue—willing often to do evil deeds which they would not do but for the easy door of escape from the consequences which they see conveniently open to them in the doctrine that they may accept Christ, be converted and saved any day or moment they choose. And that this is the practical effect in multitudes of cases, every close observer of society well knows.

Nor is the influence of the doctrine any less against virtue in the case of professing Christians. Why is it that so many church members and leaders in Christian associations and revivals become bank defaulters and criminals of one kind and another? Does the fact that they think they have got a "through ticket" (as Mr. Moody calls it) to heaven, furnish no part of the explanation? The daily papers have just been telling us that Cox, who recently murdered Mrs. Hull, in New York, was arrested in church, where he was listening to a powerful sermon upon the subject of hell. When asked if such preaching did not alarm him, he seemed greatly surprised at the question, and indignantly gave his interrogator to understand that of course it did not; such sermons did not apply to him; he was a converted and saved man.

It has been a subject of very earnest inquiry among the most thoughtful men of this country and Europe, for many years, "Why does not the popular Christianity do more for the morals of society—that part of society which comes within the lines of church membership as well as that part which remains outside those lines?" An important part of the answer is certainly to be found right here in this doctrine of conversion as held and taught by the orthodox churches. To say that a long life of virtue and usefulness has no power in and of itself to land a man anywhere but in hell, but that from a life of crime and iniquity one will go straight to heaven if only he is converted in a dying hour, is in a most serious way to discourage virtue and put a premium upon vice.

4. The doctrine *tends to prevent religious growth.* Indeed if one were setting out to devise a doctrine which should have for its express object such prevention, it seems difficult to see what he could pos-

sibly invent which would be better calculated to accomplish the end desired. The theological system of which the orthodox doctrine forms a part, teaches that the one great object of Christianity is to effect the salvation of the human soul. But when is that salvation secured? The moment one is converted—that is to say the moment he *begins* his religious life. But if merely putting on the armor secures to one the victory, what object can there be for him to go forward to do any very vigorous fighting? If simply entering the lists for the race secures for one the prize, why go through the long strain of running? If the moment one becomes converted, heaven is secure to him anyhow, what wonder that multitudes of professing Christians pass through life, never growing a particle, never reaching anything higher or better in moral or spiritual culture than their condition at the first hour of their religious career! Indeed, it is the most common of occurrences in the class-meetings and prayer and conference meetings of all churches where the orthodox idea of conversion prevails, to hear persons who have been many years church members, lamenting their want of growth in grace, and confessing that their religious lives have been not an advance but a decline from the first happy period of conversion. The familiar hymn, sung so often in all such meetings, only voices the common experience:

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void," &c.

Who does not see that the popular doctrine of conversion is largely responsible for all this, in the very fact that it holds out heaven as the reward of merely entering the lists instead of running the race, of putting on the armor instead of fighting the fight?

5. The doctrine tends *to discourage the people of the community at large who do not regard themselves as converted, from discharging religious duties, and prevents multitudes from paying the attention to religion which otherwise they would pay to it.* Almost all persons are more or less religiously inclined, and would be glad in a greater or less degree to interest themselves in religion. But this doctrine meets them with a wet blanket on the very threshold of all their religious endeavors and thoughts. It says, "Going to church will avail you nothing, unless you are converted. Giving to the support of religion or doing any religious thing will count for nothing with God, unless you are converted. Unless you are converted, even prayer in your family or in secret is a mockery." Thus Calvinism and every form of Christianity which makes much of the doctrine of conversion, prevents the awakening and development of the religious life of multitudes. This is most lamentable. A wiser and truer theology would not thus blunder at the most important point of all in dealing with men religiously. Exactly the point where persons should not be repelled or discouraged, is at the beginning of their religious endeavors. They should be taught that every pure thought, every good deed, every breathing of prayer, every slightest beginning of the religious life, is well pleasing to God, and brings in itself its sure reward.

6. The doctrine of conversion as held by orthodoxy *tends to produce Pharisaism.* The man who thinks he has been converted, regards himself as thenceforward an especial favorite of God. It is "we saints," but "you sinners." "Heaven is for us who have been born again, but for you unregenerate ones there is only hell. God is our Father; we walk in the light of his countenance; he giveth his angels charge concerning us. But to you God is an enemy: his vengeance hangs like a suspended sword over your heads, to fall upon you unless you adopt our view of things and gain God's favor by passing through the special wicket gate which we have passed through." Now, in the very nature of things it cannot but be harmful to people to have any such a notion of their superiority over their neighbors. It tends to make them egotistical, bigoted, Pharisaical, unlovely. If God has any favorites in this world, we may be sure it is not those who flatter themselves that they are such, but it is the humble, the self-forgetting, those who esteem others better than themselves, those who are most earnest to live virtuous and useful lives and least concerned about selfishly securing for themselves through tickets for the heavenly city. If there is any person in the world whom we may be sure cannot be in favor with God, and ought not to be with men, it is he who can complaisantly think of his brother—very likely a better man than he—going to hell, while he himself, because of what some one has done for him, is going to heaven.

7. The doctrine of conversion as taught by orthodoxy does more, I think, than any other doctrine except that of an eternal hell, to make human beings—alike those who class themselves among the converted and those who do not—*look forward with fear and trembling to death.* The orthodox theology teaches that death launches the human soul into either endless joy or endless woe. But what determines which it shall be? Conversion: if the soul has been converted, then the step from this world is into heaven; if not, it is into hell. But how is one going to tell whether he has really been converted or not? It is a common thing for persons to profess conversion, and yet decide afterward that they were mistaken. It not infrequently happens that persons go through the experience of being converted half a dozen times during their lives, each time sure, and their friends sure for them, that their conversion is genuine, and yet it all proves only a delusion in the end. Many persons are converted, join churches, and are active as class leaders, deacons, revivalists, preachers, for years, and yet afterward fall into sin and die in sin. Multitudes of persons who are raised under orthodox influences, believe in conversion in their early lives, and experience it, and yet in after years reach the conclusion that it is a thing purely of the imagination. Vast numbers of professing Christians go through life in doubt and fear lest they are mistaken in supposing that they have been converted.

Their trembling hearts never give over chanting that dreadful hymn:

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love my Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?"

Among the most melancholy death beds I ever saw, have been those of orthodox believers who, when the final hour came, were haunted with the awful fear: "What if, after all, I am mistaken in supposing I ever was converted! Other people in great numbers have thought they were converted, and it has turned out to be a delusion; what if it should be the same in my case, and thus this dark door of death which is just opening to me, should lead to hell instead of to heaven!" Surely it would seem that the doctrine of endless suffering for anybody were horrible enough, without adding to it this second horror of uncertainty, and especially uncertainty in the dying hour, as to whether a man has got a passport whereby he can escape it, or whether his supposed passport is only a thing of the imagination.

It is marvelous that intelligent persons can believe a theology which makes eternal joy or misery for men to depend upon a mere mental experience, which may take place in as brief a time (to use Mr. Moody's famous illustration) as it took Zaccheus to jump from the limb of the sycamore tree to the ground. But it becomes still more marvelous and dreadful when we bear in mind that that mental experience is of such a kind that in the very nature of the case nobody can be sure with regard to himself that it is not a thing purely of mental excitement or purely imaginary, as in so many, many instances on every side of us it certainly turns out to be.

8. Finally, the orthodox doctrine of conversion *lies at the foundation of revivalism, and all that is most objectionable in religious excitement in Protestant lands.* Where men are taught that religion is a natural thing, not a supernatural; that the kingdom of heaven is not a thing of observation, but is within us, a growth, a development—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; that salvation is not a thing of any such theological conversion as orthodoxy teaches, but is a thing of character and life, there is nothing to build such a thing as an evangelical revival upon. In order to furnish a basis for such a revival, we must of necessity have, first, the doctrine of a heaven of ineffable delights and a hell of unutterable misery, and, second, the doctrine that men by a certain act which they can perform now, or a certain choice which they can make instantly, can escape the one and gain the other. As soon as we get these doctrines, we have the conditions necessary powerfully to excite men, and hence work up a revival. And indeed if these doctrines are true, there ought to be revivals—and a hundred times more than there are. If these doctrines are true, there is no justification for not employing Moodys to preach, and Sankeys to sing, and Hammonds to exhort the children, and every possible instrumentality of pathetic story, and glowing rhetoric, and harrowing illustration, and startling imagery, and vehement appeal, and prayer meeting, and inquiry meeting, and children's meeting, and young people's meeting, and night meeting, and day meeting, and personal labor with sinners, and any and every possible means that can be employed to arouse and startle men, women and children, and press them to the point of making the tremendous choice on which their souls' destiny hangs. But to many persons, indeed to an ever-increasing number of persons, the very fact that conversion, with its kindred doctrines, does lead directly and necessarily thus to revivalism with all its attendant evils, and does justify and a thousand times more than justify every possible extravagance and excitement which results in the conversion of a single soul, furnishes one more of many reasons for believing that it, and all the doctrinal system which centers in it, are a gigantic mistake—a huge misconception of the very nature of religion.

III. I have now examined the doctrine of conversion as it is taught in the orthodox theology, as fully as space will allow, with a view to finding out as exactly as possible what there is in it of truth and good, and what of error and evil. From what has come to light as I have proceeded, it will be seen that religious Liberals believe in nothing that bears any very close relation to the orthodox doctrine of conversion. While our thought touches the orthodox thought at a few points, and indeed runs parallel with it in a few places,—finding in the orthodox conception some important truth,—in the main the new conception and the old, regarding this whole subject of salvation and the soul's growth in moral and spiritual life, are radically different; and we only confuse matters which should be made clear when we cover up this difference and try to go on as if no such difference existed. It is the growing realization of this which is causing some Liberal preachers and writers to make less and less use of such terms as "conversion" and "regeneration," and to employ other terms which are less marred by a false theology, to express their thought on these subjects. However, as Liberals we can certainly use the old words with perfect truthfulness, and probably it is best that we should continue to do so, if only we will take pains to explain what we mean and what we do not mean by them; hardly without. Moreover, our meanings will be as we believe the meanings which the words originally had as used by the writers of the New Testament; though, as we have seen, very far from the theological doctrines which those words stand for in the popular theology of to-day. The word "convert" means to turn or to turn about. But inasmuch as men and women, being short-sighted and imperfect beings, are liable all their lives through to fall to walking in ways that are not wise or right, we believe that conversion should enter into the experience of human beings, not once, but a thousand times; that is to say, as often as we find we are in error, we should turn to the truth; as often as we find we are wrong, we should turn to the right; as often as we find ourselves violating conscience or law, or disregarding any duty we owe to self, or fellow-man, or God, we should turn from our disobedience to obedience. Thus conversion becomes

not a single miraculous experience, entering into our lives at one point and never reappearing, but it becomes a law of our lives. It is the soul's struggle, renewed every day, and never ending until death; out of weakness into strength, out of passion into patience, out of ignorance into wisdom, out of selfishness into love, out of sin into holiness. Thus Jesus, when at one time his disciples began showing signs of worldly ambition, and came to him to inquire which of them should be greatest in the kingdom which they thought he was going to set up, reproved them and impressed upon them their need to be converted (that is, to turn away from their ambitious desires) and to become as little children. And at another time, after Peter had been a disciple of Jesus nearly all through the latter's public career, in view of an exhibition of unusual boastfulness and cowardice on the part of Peter, Jesus says to him, "When thou art converted (that is, when you have seen your error and turned in sorrow from it, to do better), strengthen thy brethren."

This, then, is the kind of conversion which religious Liberals believe in—a constant turning away from all that is low, impure, debasing, wrong, to the high, the pure, the ennobling, the right, the unattained.

Exactly in harmony with this is our idea of "regeneration." Our orthodox friends insist earnestly upon the need of *a* new birth. We insist quite as earnestly upon the need of new *births*. We believe that to be born again, and to go forward with the years to be born again and again, into new and ever new, into constantly finer and higher spiritual life, is what Jesus taught, and what all best human experience teaches to be the true law of our being. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," he gave expression to a far larger truth than our orthodox friends seem ever to dream. Since in human experience the subjective dominates the objective, and every man's world is in an important sense the creation of his own soul, it follows that all human progress must be very truly by new births. To be born again is to go forward to a deeper experience or to a larger view of truth. To read a book which opens to one a new world of thought, is to be born into a new thought-kingdom. To find one's self waking to a love of any new and worthy object of love, is to be born into a new heart-world, Thus ever new and nobler spiritual births are waiting for men all along life's journey. Except a man be born again he cannot see any new kingdom of God, whether it be a kingdom of truth, or love, or duty, or patience, or hope, or faith, or worship. Oh, poor and small indeed is the life into which only one new birth comes!

When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again," he followed up the declaration with these significant words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: *so* is every one that is born of the Spirit." What light comes with these words! How they break down the stereotyped religion of the creeds and the theologies! How they widen our thought about this whole subject of conversion, regeneration, the origin and progress of the religious life, God's methods of touching and lifting up the souls of men! Infinite in number and variety are the avenues by which God's inspiration comes to human beings. If nature opens its great book to us, luminous with revelations of God, then nature becomes the source of a new birth —nay, very likely of a hundred new births to us.

> "One impulse from the autumn wood
> May teach us more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good
> Than all the sages can."

A father's love for his little child may be God's instrumentality for converting that father, not once, but a thousand times,—that is, from a thousand selfish feelings, base impulses, degrading habits and thoughts, evil deeds. A tear of sorrow in the eye of a mother may do more to reclaim a wayward son and bring him back to duty and goodness, and therefore to God, than a hundred sermons, or prayers, or bibles, or revivals. So many-sided a thing is conversion, when we come rightly to understand that great word! So varied are the new births of the human soul! From so many sources do the seeds of faith, and hope, and love, fall into man's spirit! So wonderful are the operations of the Divine Spirit, by which all germs of the soul's higher life are planted, and watered, and sunned, and brought forward to their blossoming and fruitage!

Not but that into here and there a human life, as I have said, there comes a great overshadowing crisis-experience, corresponding very well with the orthodox idea of conversion,—a changing as by miracle the deepest currents of the person's being. Of such radical and extraordinary conversions as these, I have mentioned Paul as a typical example. But we must no more expect that all human beings are going to pass through such an experience, than that all rivers are going to have in them a cataract like Niagara. These striking cases simply come in as illustrating a part of the infinite variety of ways through which the human soul "finds itself"—rises up into its higher life. Not only are the lives which have in them any such great crisis changes, the very, very rare exception, but even in the case of hardened or notorious sinners who reform and become good men, the reformation is usually accomplished by no such single, sudden, convulsive effort, but by many resolves, many struggles, many settings out anew after temporary fallings back, many victories, and alas! many defeats before the final victory comes.

The ordinary as well as the normal religious life is a growth, beginning with the very birth of the child, growing with the child's growth, strengthening with the child's strength, and continuing right on through the whole history of the man or woman, till death. It does not begin with any pronounced and never-to-be-forgotten experience of penitence for sin, crying to God for pardon, accepting Christ, joy of conversion. It is not something brought miraculously from without and grafted by an arbitrary process upon the human life, in such or such a year, and day, and hour. Rather it is the silent,

slow, natural, by-day-and-by-night unfolding of what is deepest and most divine, and because most divine therefore most truly human, within the human spirit itself,—a process which is a thousand times more likely to have its conscious beginning in the smile or tear of the mother over the little child in her arms, than in any sermon of preacher or exhortation or prayer of revivalist. But in no two human beings is it ever the same. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whither it cometh and where it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

"The soul's new birth is as a flower,
Fresh budding in its place,
With inward joy, and soft, sweet power,
To form the outward grace,
And show what germs of beauty rest
Within the rudest human breast.

"The soul's new birth is as a star
Just peeping out of night;
From depths of darkness, O, how far
It reacheth after light,
And twinkles with a glad new sense
Of God's bright shining providence,

"Oh, come, thou quickening grace from heaven,
With radiant beams of love,
And give our waiting souls the leaven
Of new life from above,
Till all the thoughts of all our days
Shall blossom sweetly into praise."

TABLE TALK.

THOREAU'S WILDNESS.

ROBERT COLLYER.

"In wildness is the preservation of the world. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the wild. The cities import it at any price. From the forest and wilderness came the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every State which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a wild source. An African hunter tells us that the skin of most antelopes just killed emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass. I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of nature that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence and remind us of those parts of nature which he most haunts. All good things are wild and free. Give me for my neighbors and friends, wild men, not tame ones. In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dulness is but another name for tameness. It is the free, wild thinking in Hamlet and the Iliad, and in all the scriptures and mythologies not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild thought which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. I love to see animals reassert their native rights, as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of her pasture and boldly swims the river in the Spring—a cold, gray tide, swollen by the melted snow; it is the buffalo again crossing the Mississippi. Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps that surround my native town, than from the gardens. Yes, if it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else in the Dismal Swamp, I should certainly decide for the swamp. I rejoice that men themselves have some wild oats to sow before they can become submissive members of society. All men are not equally fit subjects for civilization; and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, this is no reason why others should have their natures broken, that they may be reduced to the same level. I knew a boy who, from his peculiar energy, was called 'Buster' by his playmates, and this rightly supplanted his Christian name. I would not have every man nor every part of man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated. I hear of a society for the diffusion of useful knowledge; there is equal need of a society for the diffusion of useful ignorance. There are other letters for a child to learn than those invented by Cadmus. I would say to the society for the diffusion of useful knowledge, Sometimes go to grass; you have eaten hay long enough; the Spring has come with its green crop. A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful; while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless—besides being ugly. I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil—to regard man as part and parcel of nature rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school committee, and every one of you will take care of that."

Such is Thoreau's creed and confession of wildness, worth a note I think if one would thoroughly understand the man. It defines at once his freedom and his limitation, and within these lines he can also say with a frank simplicity, "I am the way and the truth and the life." How he would have chuckled to hear those Indians reply to good Master Eliot: "We greatly approve of your idea that on one day in seven we shall do no work. We don't like to do much any day, and it suits us exactly to be told that to do nothing at all on your Sunday pleases the Great Spirit best of all." And to hear the barbarians answer Suplicus Severus, when he was breaking his heart over their wildness: "It is not fair to expect that we should live like angels when we are only souls." And how deftly he would have turned the moan of the poor missionary into something like a psalm, who told us that after laboring for more than thirty years with the remnant of a tribe of Indians on the peninsula, who still held traditions of the old Jesuit teaching in their hearts, found as the end of all his labor that they were only skin-deep Presbyterians, and within this Catholics, and then deep down in their nature, Indian. Pres-

byterians in easy-going times, Catholics when they struck a rather grim perplexity, but when that came which sought them out to the last hiding-place of their nature and demanded the whole man, then the savage smote through all the environments and leaped forth full armed to fight his way to whatever lay beyond. Such things would have pleased him vastly, because he believed in all this wildness as one with the divine order, and in wild men also as God's children. He was one of the very few men we have ever heard of who could find room in his nature for the Modoc as well as for the Moravian, and if in the heart of him he rather preferred the Modoc, we must remember he stood almost alone among the millions of us to affirm there may be two sides to the question, while we see only one.

Thoreau meant to say this and much more in the Lyceum, as I find in a note to a friend not published, and it stands there as "An essay on the Wild," of which he regrets he cannot furnish a copy, as it has run to a hundred pages, has only been prepared for the Lyceum, and he has no time to copy it. It is fortunate, however, for those who want to understand the man, that we have it now in print, for this is no doubt a revelation of the man's innermost nature, the confession and creed of the Rosseau of this new world, free from the defilement of the old; a man who believed in wildness with his whole heart, but it was the pure heart of the Huguenot crossed by the Puritan, which held the treasure.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

J. LL. J.

—Rev. J. H. Crooker, of Laporte, Ind., is using his vacation in attempting to resurrect the cause at Valparaiso, with every promise of success.

—Rev. R. L. Herbert has been preaching at Madison during his vacation, and is to preach in Kansas City the first three Sundays in September.

—The old church at Jackson, Mich., is torn down, and the corner-stone of the new has been laid.

—A beautiful lot has been bought and paid for at Cleveland, Ohio, and Mr. Hosmer left for his summer vacation with the plans for the new church fairly in the builders' hands.

—Evansville, Ind., is getting ready to build a parsonage this fall.

—Rev. Mr. Hunting is to preach at Bloomington, Ill., the first Sunday in September.

—Mr. Gordon is expected home from England the first of September.

—Rev. Brooke Herford and wife joined with their old friends with the Strangeways Free Church, Manchester, Eng., in their annual picnic on the 26th ult.

—Rev. John Snyder and family are spending their vacation at Geneva Lake, Wis.

—The movement so auspiciously started by the Unitarian ladies at the Annual Conference at Cincinnati, last May, is by no means dead, though it has been silent during these vacation days. Arangement is in progress by which a Secretary for each of our Western States will be appointed to take charge of the work, and the list will be duly announced in UNITY. The whole will be under the management of a central committee, of which Mrs. S. C. Ll. Jones, of Janesville, will act as chairman, Mrs. Robert Hosea, of Cincinnati, as secretary, Mrs. C. P. Wooley, of Chicago, as treasurer.

—Grove Meetings. Religion has been taking a turn out of doors among the Liberals. Revs. T. B. Forbush and J. H. Crooker held a basket meeting at Hanna, Ind., July 13th. Revs. Cutter, Thatcher, Bixby and Savage have been holding Sunday meetings at Bemis' Point on Chatauqua Lake, since July 31st. Rev. W. S. Balch, of Dubuque, preached to an immense audience at Geneva Lake, Wis., Aug. 10th. Revs. Herbert, Jones, Simmons and Wright hold a basket and grove meeting at Wyoming, Wis., Aug. 17th. And then there was the great grove meeting at Wier's Landing, N. H., where the Liberals came and went for a week, with the fair motto of UNITY, Freedom, Fellowship, and Character in Religion, engraved over the stand, and Revs. Hunting, Gilman, Chainey and Jones represented the West.

NOTES.

The *Christian Life* informs us that "a further division is now threatened among 'Evangelicals.' There are about to be 'Broad Evangelicals' and 'Narrow Evangelicals,' as well as 'Evangelicals.' This party will be split into three sections."

The best way to help UNITY is to circulate it; the best way to help our Sunday-school society is to use and circulate the material it offers. For instance: "Dear Miss Roberts—I have read with much interest in UNITY of July 16, the excellent 'Rules to make Home Pleasant.' Will you be kind enough to send me two dozen of those on 'thicker paper,' mentioned in the notice. I enclose $2 to pay for two dozen and postage, and if any is left, will you oblige me by using it in any way that seems to you good. With interest in your work, I am yours with regard." See advertisement of these "Home Rules" on last page.

Dr. Caird recently said in a sermon: "The higher culture by its very nature was the sworn foe of carnality and vice, the friend and foster-nurse of self-restraint and purity and temperance, and a free, generous, simple, unworldly life. Though not in itself religious, it was better than some kinds of religion. It was better than a religion of selfish terrorism. To be kept pure by the love of intellectual beauty was better than to be kept pure by the fear of hell. To have one's life ennobled by reverence for a spiritual ideal of any kind, was better than to live a decorous life merely for the sake of being saved in the world to come."

A correspondent of the New York *Tribune* writes that "the amount of public land entered for homestead settlement in the year ending June 30, 1879, was a trifle over 6,000,000 acres, or an area a little greater than that of the State of New Hampshire, and considerably larger than that of New Jersey. The average number of acres taken by each homestead settler, as shown by the entries of the last ten years, is 120. The unsettled public lands in the United States therefore received a population of at least 50,000 families and individual

settlers during the last twelve months, under the operation of the Homestead law alone. The real accession probably far exceeded 150,000 persons. In the number of homestead entries, Kansas takes the lead with 61,034. Minnesota stands next with 51,575, and Nebraska third with 47,962. In the rate of increase from 1877 to 1878, Dakota took the lead. The number of homestead entries in that Territory in 1877 was 1,154, and in 1878 it was 4,128. In the States of Kansas, Minnesota and Nebraska and the Territory of Dakota the homestead entries in 1877 amounted to 910,397 acres, and in 1878 to 2,882,683 acres; an increase of over 300 per cent. In 1872 the total area covered by entries under the Homestead law amounted to 4,600,000 acres. In 1873 the entries fell off to 3,793,000 acres; in 1875 to 2,356,000 acres, and in 1877 to 2,178,000 acres."

The moral quality and influence of some modern preaching, is illustrated by a recent sermon of Rev. Wm. F. Dickenson, D.D., in a Methodist church in New York city. "The preacher dwelt on the power of Christ to save all who repent of their crimes. Salvation was open to Cain, who murdered his brother, as it was to the thief upon the cross. David had murdered Uriah, had been forgiven, and was called a man after God's own heart. Francisco Portello, the Italian who murdered Michael Bolander, said the preacher, if he will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and undergo Divine cleansing, may yet stand among the justified at God's right hand. With reference to Chastine Cox, I can speak authoritatively, for I visit, talk, read and pray with him about every other day. From the moment he committed the burglary he began to pray; and from that moment until now he has ceased not to importune Heaven for forgiveness for his sin, and for that special preparation to meet his God in peace. He is cheerful now, and, if he is executed, he will endeavor to die the same. Four years ago in this church he was invited forward to the anxious seat, to seek the salvation of his soul. He went. Subsequently, in the church of his choice, he found the Lord precious to his soul, he says. Since then he has fallen on evil times, has offended the Savior, but remembering the invitation, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon,' he acted upon it, and now is light of heart because of it. I think him a saved man."

M. Renan, in his inaugural address before the French Academy, said of the beneficial influence of science: "Who does not see that Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Lavoisier, Laplace, have changed the foundation of human thought in modifying totally the idea of the universe and its laws; in substituting for the infantile imaginings of non-scientific ages the notion of an eternal order, in which caprice and particular will have no thought? Have they diminished the universe, as some think? For my part, I think the contrary. The skies as we see them are far superior to that solid vault spangled with shining dots and upborne some leagues above us by pillars which contented the simpler ages. I do not much regret the little spirits that were wont to guide the planets in their orbits; gravitation does the work much better, and if, at times, I have a sad remembrance of the nine angelic choirs wheeling round the orbs of the seven planets, and of the crystal sea that lies at the feet of the Eternal, I console myself with the thought that the infinite into which we look is really infinite, and a thousand times more sublime to eyes of true contemplation than all the azure circles of Angelico of Fiesole. M. Thiers rarely allowed a fine night to pass without gazing upon that boundless sea. 'It is my mass,' he said. How far do the chemist's profound views upon the atom surpass the vague notion of matter on which the scholastic philosophy was fed! * * And as to nobleness of character, how can one accuse science of striking at it when he sees the minds that science forms, the unselfishness, the absolute devotion to life work, that she inspires and sustains? With the saints, the heroes, the great men of all ages, we may fearlessly compare our men of scientific minds, given solely to the research of truth, indifferent to fortune, often proud of their poverty, smiling at the honors they are offered, as careless of flattery as of obloquy, sure of the worth of that they are doing, and happy because they possess truth. Great, I grant, are the joys which a firm belief in things divine confers, but these the inward happiness of the wise equals, for he feels that he toils at an eternal work, and belongs to the company of those of whom it is said, 'Their works do follow them.'"

Secretary Evarts has done a substantial service to the country in procuring reports from our Consuls abroad of the condition of labor, arranging them, and securing their publication. The facts contained in these reports, outlined in the Washington dispatches, will serve as a complete answer to the ravings of demagogues over the wrongs and woes of laboring men in this country, and will come with especial force at the time when Congressman Wright is feasting a Communist committee somewhere at Government expense, and General Butler is making ready to run for Governor of Massachusetts. These reports show that the workingmen of France and England and some other European countries are receiving wages at the present day only half the figure, on the average, of those paid in this country; that in Germany, Italy and Spain wages are only one-third as great, and in the Netherlands only one-fourth as great, as those paid in the United States. On the other hand, the cost of food is smaller here than in Europe. The American laborer has the advantage on both debit and credit sides of the account; he gets more money than his European brother, and he can buy more with the same money. It is too much to expect workmen to learn these truths and others like them from the economists and the writers for reviews, but when they are set down in plain fashion in Government reports, which will be distributed free of charge so long as the limited edition holds out, there does seem to be ground for the hope that even the least naturalized importation from foreign countries will come in time to understand them. Indeed the men who have but lately reached this side of the Atlantic are most likely perhaps to see the folly of the demagogues' speeches, and to know that they are better off than they have ever been before. But such Americans as may have been misled into the belief that their state is a very wretched one, may now answer fools with facts.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

Felix Adler, in his recent address before the Free Religious Association, denied that O. B. Frothingham had in the least abandoned the cause of Free Religion. He said: "For twenty years Mr. Frothingham has labored in the city of New York, in the face of the most stupendous obstacles, the only one among the religious teachers of any note in the metropolis who had the boldness to found an independent church, and to place himself outside the Christian ranks. His influence

upon the thought of the country has been greater than can be measured in words. Who can tell how many struggling souls he helped to greater light and clearness, how many drooping energies he reinvigorated, how many thousands the mere example of his own moral courage lifted to higher ideals of conscience and roused to stricter scruples? The growth of the Free Religious movement in New York testifies forcibly to the value of his labors. At the same time, it is true that he did not embody the Free Religious idea in instructions. The time had not yet come for that, the urgent need for associated effort was not yet felt with sufficient distinctness, the indispensable work of preparation had not yet been completed. The first epoch in the development of Liberalism may rightly be called the epoch of Individualism. In this the ground is broken for the reception of the new seed; the people, having scarcely been freed from the shackles of superstition, delight still each one in his individual freedom. They have suffered so much from their bonds that they are afraid even of necessary ties. They try honestly to do what is good, but each one prefers what is 'good in his own eyes.' And it was of this stage of Liberalism that Mr. Frothingham said, in his closing address, that the end had come. But surely that was a note of triumph, not a signal of defeat, which he sounded. He spoke of the childhood of Free Religion as being past, the time of maturity as being near at hand; he spoke of the transition period as over, of a new and grander period of constructive effort as about to open. I myself heard him address an audience, a few evenings before he embarked, on the future of Free Religion. Never did he seem to me more thoroughly warmed to the subject. He dwelt upon the necessity of practical humanitarian work; he demanded effective organization; he seemed to be looking into a glorious dawn of spiritual freedom, and not even a shadow of possible failure for the large cause which he has so much at heart obscured his vision. He ended by holding out the cheering hope that he would return to us, and devote his rejuvenated strength to the splendid task that awaits the consecrated efforts of the liberal leaders."

A correspondent of the London *Whitehall Review*, reports his conversation with M. Renan, from which we take the following: "M. Renan said: 'The lower classes in France are distinctly positivists and free thinkers. The working classes in towns are still more—they are anti-clerical. In the country the peasants are simply skeptical; but in towns there is a deep-rooted dislike to all that savors of the priesthood.' 'Is not the Parisian populace more skeptical than that of other towns?' 'No; it is the same in all the towns of France. The working classes deny all that is miraculous and supernatural, and have a deep-rooted dislike to the clergy.' 'Surely this must have a very bad moral tendency?' 'No, I don't think so,' said the great philosopher. 'We find constantly that what we thought absolutely indispensable we can really get on very well without, and there can be no doubt that the lower classes in France to-day are infinitely more moral than they were formerly. Take for instance, the department I know best, that of Seine et Marne. Looking at the Assize Calendar, one is at first shocked at the great number of crimes and offenses, but on inquiry, one discovers that in former days they were infinitely more, only then they were not punished, and consequently not recorded and commented on.' 'Is there no hope or chance of a religious belief inspiring the French again?' 'I hardly think so,' said M. Renan. 'Father Hyacinthe might have some chance, but there is too much of the priest about him for the multitude to adopt his precepts. You see he still celebrates mass. His scheme will, I fancy, not enjoy a very long life, although, from what I hear, his church is well attended. An eloquent preacher, with just sufficient idealism, but not too much, and no superstition, might perhaps prevail, but I almost doubt it. A complete and entire disbelief in the supernatural is too deeply rooted in the minds of all the working classes of France to be easily eradicated. What is really the most to be regretted in the condition of these classes in towns, is their dislike to marriage, and their marked tendency to endeavor to escape from such social duties and obligations.' Here there was a pause, and then M. Renan resumed: 'But as regards what you ask me—my opinion as to the condition of religious belief among the lower classes of France to-day—I can only say that their skepticism and their disbelief in the supernatural are profound. As I have said before, the workingman trusts to his own common sense, and will not merely believe a legend because it is told him, and if he cannot find in his own experience some proof that it is true.'"

Oliver Johnson in his "Fall of Slavery" in the N. Y. *Tribune*, writes: "The American Board of Foreign Missions was then rising into prominence and power, and drawing to itself the sympathy and almost idolatrous reverence of the churches, especially in New England. It was natural to expect that the men who were contributing of their wealth to redeem the heathen in the farthest ends of the earth from their ignorance and debasement would be among the first to respond to an appeal in behalf of their heathenized and imbruted slaves at home. But all such expectations proved vain. The managers of the Board were deadly hostile to the anti-slavery movement from the start. The piety of Boston was subsidized in the interest of the cotton trade. The champions of the Board appeared to think that if the churches should become enlisted in the anti-slavery cause, they would cease to feel a proper interest in foreign missions. And so, while the churches were constantly reminded of the ignorance and degradation of the heathen abroad, every pains was taken to conceal or excuse the enforced debasement of the heathen at home. It was held to be a primary duty of the American churches to send the Bible and the Gospel of Christ to foreign nations sitting in darkness and the shadow of death; but at the same time it was held to be perfectly compatible with Christianity and the teaching of the Holy Book to prevent men and women born and living in America from learning how to spell the name of God, to compel them to work without wages under the lash, and to sell them on the auction-block and put the proceeds in the Lord's treasury! Oh, what a night of ignorance, delusion and sin was that from which the anti-slavery movement delivered the American people!"

Bishop Colenso, now sixty-five years old, is described as "a handsome, stately old man. He has a massive head, crowned with abundant silvery locks; a mobile mouth, with strongly-marked lines of incessant study and much care about it; deep-set eyes, pathetic almost in their kindly and earnest expression; a stature far beyond the average; and a presence at once dignified and simple. His home at Pietermaritzburg is a long, low, cosey house, planted amid the most beautiful scenery."

The New York *Times* tells how Howard Crosby, speaking on behalf of the "Law and Order Society," of Newark, was rudely interrupted in broken English, by a burly, conceited foreigner of the Communistic type: "Dr. Crosby looked at him for a moment, and intense stillness reigned among the audience. 'When you have learned the English language sufficiently well to speak or understand it, then you can come here to insult an American!' thundered Dr. Crosby. The man settled back into his seat as a roar of applause like the noise of an earthquake broke the stillness. Men and women clapped their hands for at least two minutes, and the excitement became intense. When the applause ceased, Dr. Crosby pointed his finger at the man, and fairly shouted, in his indignation: 'That is just a specimen of what we are enduring in this country. Men who have not yet got the brogue off them are attempting to destroy and overturn American institutions!' Another burst of perfectly overwhelming and long-continued applause resounded through the church, and Dr. McNair suggested to the man that he had better keep quiet and not disturb the meeting. The man nodded a stolid acquiescence, and evidently felt that he had got into the wrong box, his face being livid white on seeing the indignation he had aroused."

An exchange informs us that "the Georgian town of Jelizawetpol, near Tiflis, has suffered a plague of locusts almost as bad as that which afflicted Egypt in the days of Moses. On the 20th of April, the insects invaded the town in such numbers that the merchants had to shut up their shops, and walking about the streets was exceedingly difficult. The Russian authorities ordered the inhabitants to make a united effort to kill the pests, but the generous people refused, believing it a sin to destroy a locust, until the authorities threatened to punish every householder who failed to deliver daily a given weight of dead insects. The canals were filled with locusts, so that water for drinking and washing could only be obtained by straining. The houses swarmed with the creatures, and many families went a week without bread because their ovens were literally filled with them. They tried in vain to drive the locusts away by lighting holy candles and burning incense. The Armenian priests regarded the plague as a visitation of God, and brought from a neighboring town the bones of Jacob, which they carried through the streets of the afflicted city in procession, fairly wading through masses of dead and living locusts as they marched along with the relics of the patriarch. The energetic measures taken by the police finally abated the evil, but not until the gardens, orchards and vineyards had been stripped bare, and the people had suffered for more than a week."

Laird Collier, recently preaching on the pastoral of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which urged prayer for good harvest weather, said: "The highest Christian authority in Great Britain asked the Church that represented the religion of England, to pray for fine weather. What did the suggestion mean? The end of the prayer was, 'abundant harvests for our people.' But who knew best, God or the province of Canterbury, what was the best weather for our people? And who was to decide, the eternal, unvarying prescience of God or the people of Great Britain, whether abundant harvests would be the best for our people, or otherwise? No doubt the mercantile and business community and the trading classes in Great Britain felt that it would be best to have abundant harvests, but were they quite sure that they knew better than God? Were they sure that the great increase in wealth in England during the last forty years had not been a source of great moral harm? The prayer implied that the wish of man should stand against the wisdom of the Author of nature. There was not a man of science in the world who was not perfectly certain that the pastoral was nonsense, and who said to himself that the Archbishop of Canterbury ought to have known better. It was a simple question of ignorance or dishonesty. It was pitiful and painful to call the people together to pray in that way, because the prayer was worldly in its aim; it could not do any manner of good, and it was putting man's wish in the place of God's will."

Dr. Joseph P. Thompson writes from Berlin to the *Independent*: "By long custom, and till recently by law, every Prussian who was neither Catholic nor Jew was held to be born and was compelled to be baptized, confirmed and married within the pale of the Evangelical Church. Now that these laws have been somewhat relaxed, and the people have liberty of action in church affairs, it appears that many are strongly tinctured with Liberal theology. The Orthodox clergy are attempting to extirpate Liberalism from the National Church by stringent discipline. If they would have the manliness to separate from the State and form churches of their own, they might set up their own standards of faith and conditions of membership; but in this State institution, what right have they to impose their interpretations of Scripture upon fellow-members, who are in the church by the same rights and on the same conditions with themselves? The other day a conference of Orthodox pastors assembled in Berlin; but, instead of considering the religious wants of the people and how best to meet these, they spent their whole time in denouncing Liberalism, and declaring that this should not be allowed a foothold in the National Church. This proceeding has excited general indignation. A judge, strong in the confidence of the royal family, said to me yesterday: 'We must all now take hold of this matter, and put down these imperious assumptions of the clergy.' And the papers are ringing with the question: 'Is the church for the pastors or for the people?' This zeal of the Orthodox clergy for their views of evangelical truth is certainly to be respected; but far better would be a zeal for personal piety and spiritual freedom among the members of the congregation. At the same time, just across the border, in Bohemia, a little band have left the National Orthodox Church because of its coldness and formalism. These humble, pious souls are prevented by the police from meeting to pray and worship in their own way. Yet I find it hard to awaken sympathy among German Evangelical pastors for these suffering brethren. They answer: 'Oh! the Orthodox Church should suffice for them.' Such anomalies will not cease till the Church shall be wholly separated from the State."

THE RULES TO MAKE HOME PLEASANT, referred to in Unity of July 15th, are now ready. They are printed on heavy tinted paper, and are designed for home-walls where there are children. Price 30 cents per doz. or 5 cents per copy.

PRIVATE SCHOOL.

Two pupils (either sex) will be received into a liberal family, Sept. 1, for instruction in English branches. Healthy location. Unitarian Church and Sunday School. For further particulars address, T. H. EDDOWES,
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SCRIPTURES, OLD AND NEW.

COMPILED BY F. L. H.

CHARITY.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give up my body that I may be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, maketh no account of an injury; rejoiceth not at iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. And now there abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. —*Paul.*

Whoso giveth a cup of cold water only, shall not lose the reward: it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Therefore I say unto you, love even your enemies and do good, despairing of no one; and your reward will be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: For He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.—*Jesus.*

Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. —*Paul.*

The most beautiful thing in human life is attainment to a resemblance of the Divine. —*Plato,* (429—345 *B. C.*)

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, yet he cometh to want. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall himself be watered. —*Hebrew Proverbs,* (*chiefly collected* 800—600 *B. C.*)

The charm of a man is his kindness.—*Ibid.*

Every good act is charity. Giving water to the thirsty is charity. Removing stones and thorns from the road is charity. Exhorting your fellow-men to good deeds is charity. Putting a wanderer in the right path is charity. A pleasant look is charity. A man's true wealth is the good he does in this world. When he dies, mortals will ask what property he has left behind him; but angels will inquire, 'What good deeds hast thou sent before thee?'—*Mishkat,* (*a collection of traditional anecdotes and discourses of Mohammed.*)

I cannot fall out or contemn a man for an error, or conceive why a difference in opinion should divide an affection; for controversies, disputes, and argumentations, both in philosophy and in divinity, if they meet with peacable natures, do not infringe the laws of charity. In all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then reason, like a bad hound, spends upon a false scent, and forsakes the question first started.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

I will be mild and benevolent towards every man, ready to show him his mistake, not reproachfully, nor yet as making a display of my endurance, but nobly and honestly, like the great Phocion.

—*Marcus Aurelius,* (121—180 *A. C.*)

I hold not so narrow a conceit of this virtue as to conceive that to give alms only is to be charitable, or to think a piece of liberality can comprehend the total of charity. Divinity hath wisely divided the acts thereof into many branches, and hath taught us in this narrow way many paths unto goodness: as many ways as we may do good, so many ways we may be charitable. There are infirmities not only of body, but of soul, and fortunes, which do require the merciful hand of our abilities. I cannot contemn a man for ignorance, but behold him with as much pity as I do Lazarus. It is no greater charity to clothe his body, than apparel the nakedness of his soul.—*Sir Thomas Browne,* (1605—1682.)

Then the shepherds took the pilgrims and led them to Mount Charity, where they showed them a man that had a bundle of cloth lying before him, out of which he cut coats and garments for the poor that stood about him; yet his bundle or roll of cloth was never the less. Then said they, What should this be? This is, said the shepherds, to show you that he that has a heart to give of his labor to the poor, shall never want wherewithal. 'He that watereth shall be watered himself.' And the cake that the widow gave to the prophet, did not cause that she had ever the less in her barrel, —*John Bunyan,* (1628—1688.)

Manners must be inspired by the good heart. There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior, like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us. 'Tis good to give a stranger a meal, or a night's lodging. 'Tis better to be hospitable to his good meaning and thought, and give courage to a companion. We must be as courteous to a man as we are to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of a good light. —*Emerson.*

There are some men who see all the evil, and never trace, never give themselves the trouble of suspecting, the root of goodness out of which it sprung. There are others who love to go deep down, and see *why* a man came to do wrong, and whether there was not some excuse, or some redeeming cause, in order that they may be just. * * Now that is the 'charity which covereth a multitude of sins.' It understands by sympathy. It is that glorious nature which has affinity with good under all forms, and loves to find it, to believe in it, and to see it. And therefore such men,—God's rare and best ones,—learn to make allowances; not from weak sentiment, which calls wrong right, but from that heavenly charity which sees right lying at the root of wrong.

—*F. W. Robertson,* (1816—1853.)

He that by daily considering his own infirmities and failures makes the error of his neighbor or servant to be his own case, and remembers that he daily needs God's pardon and his brother's charity, will not be apt to rage at the levities, or misfortunes, or indiscretions of another; greater than which he considers that he is very frequently and more inexcusably guilty of. —*Jeremy Taylor,* (1613—1667.)

The Holy Supper is kept indeed
In whatso we share with another's need:
Not what we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and ME.
(*The Christ-vision to Sir Launfal.*)—*James Russell Lowell.*

SUNDAY-SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

J. LL. J.

III. PREPARATION.

1. *Teachers' Meeting.*—This is absolutely indispensable to a Sunday School that aims at thorough work, systematic study and real efficiency. Without it it will be impossible to secure unity of purpose or method. Without its help a large majority of teachers are incompetent to the task of teaching morals and religion to their classes. Without it we fear many Pastors and Superintendents will habitually enter the Sunday School without that previous preparation necessary to success. We base the importance of the teachers' meeting, then, upon the following considerations: A. It will secure systematic study, give unity to the School. B. It is needed as a normal school for the teachers, affording a training which, if rightly used, will make useful teachers out of ordinary material; but if persistently neglected, will leave even skillful teachers often at a loss to know what to do for their classes. C. It will necessitate on the part of the Pastor or Superintendent, at least that previous preparation of the subject to be presented to the School, which will enable him to intelligently direct and wisely sum up the hour's study. D. Lastly, the importance of the work demands that at least one hour in the week be religiously set aside for the study of great questions which it is the province of the Sunday School to deal with. The Liberal Sunday-School worker, at least, ought to realize that the task is no easy one. A kind heart and winning smile is not enough to make a good teacher for a Liberal Sunday School. These indispensable qualities must be accompanied with a clear head and studious habit, if children are to be prepared to enter intelligently into the social and religious conflicts of our times. We are cast in an age rife with theological controversy. Questions which have been closed for centuries are declared open again, and the foundation of many things held sacred and absolute are suspected by many of not being fundamental. The origin and authority of Bibles, the quality and quantity of the inspiration with which the seers and teachers of old were endowed, the function of the external church, the uses and abuses of Sunday, as well as the still more solemn problems of duty in its relations to home, society, self and Deity, are among the weighty and perplexing problems which the Liberal Sunday School must grapple with. To evade them in any way is to surrender their title to existence, and these are questions which are plainly beyond the reach of any save those who make them the object of careful, systematic and continuous study—such study as the great majority of teachers busily engaged in the world's work, cannot give. The Pastor, as a rule, must bring the result of his work upon these subjects to the teachers' meeting, if the teachers are to be properly posted upon these questions. These considerations ought to be a sufficient answer to the common objections to a teachers' meeting, viz: (*a*) Lack of time. There is always time for the prime concerns of life,—only secondary interests are crowded out for want of time. Is there time enough to elaborately clothe the child? to feed him even to excess, to pass him through the high-school, academy or college to secure a culture—which does not always ennoble or strengthen—and still not one hour a week to be found to be devoted to these major interests of the child? Is there time enough to be true to the technical demands of polite society, for politics, for the club and the opera, time for parties and excursions, and still no time to avail one's self for the hour's conference over the primal problems of existence—Life, Death and Deity? Looking at it in its selfish individual bearing, leaving the children out of the question, is there time for the study of Greek and Roman classics and not an hour a week for the study of the incomparable treasures of the Hebrews? Is there time for Milton and Dante and none for Job? Will you, in your great greed for culture and knowledge, allow Dickens and Thackeray to crowd out Jesus and Paul? Can you, through any solitary use of your hour, gain as much information, familiarize yourself with as wide a literature and acquaint yourself with the thought of as many leaders of thought as you can at a well-conducted teachers' meeting? All those who make this plea of lack of time to attend teachers' meetings, unconsciously reveal the improper prospective in their lines. They disclose the importance in which they hold this matter: the child's dress first, his conscience second; the multiplication table, then the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule; society first, the Sunday School second. The magazine and the novel first, and then religion, its history, its prophets and its promises. All such will neglect the teachers' meeting on the plea that they have no time. When the Sunday School and its interests shall be ranked among the prime concerns of life, then the teachers' meeting will be a previous engagement, before which all other demands give way. (*b*) A second objection, lack of attendance. Many teachers' meetings have been abandoned because the attendance is small,—a most unsatisfactory excuse. Nowhere is the old promise more often realized, "Where two or three are gathered together," &c., than here. The number who will be interested in thoughtful studies are necessarily few in every community, but these few are "the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump." The few who come gain the blessing, the School is blessed through them, and those who stay away are shamed by their poverty of ideas. Again, I'd say the only way to have a teachers' meeting is to have it. He who would conduct it must be absolutely above the cramping tyranny of numbers. Any one who will persist in sacredly respecting this engagement, spite of small attendance, will find his Sunday School work a joy as well as a great source of culture. The few who do come will be the heart of the Sunday School, the vigilance committee and executive board. (*c*) "Lack of interest" is the third objection. The chief answer to this objection is given in my answer to the first objection,—"lack of time." Once its importance there can scarcely be lack of interest in a meeting, however conducted, but much does depend on the method.

How make the teachers' meeting interesting? (*a*) Conversation. Get acquainted. The first difficulty is to get the members to talk; the last and perhaps most serious difficulty is to keep them from all talking at once. Learn to talk and learn to listen. Suppress all side issues; beware of wandering into small talk or gossip. It is well for the leader to be flanked with a few notes and authorities in the way of cyclopædias, commentaries, &c., but they serve him best when he doesn't use them. Essay-reading and the speech-making habit brings minimum results. The ideal meeting is when the company visit an hour over the topic in hand. Be fearless and frank. (*b*) Educational. Break new ground at every meeting. Do not stick too closely to the letter of the lesson. Get a back-ground of intelligence, a general setting to your topic. Forget the Sunday School for the first three-quarters of an hour. Study the subject large. Thus will each meeting become its own justification, and the members will find they can't stay away.

How to make it useful to the Sunday School. Let the last half-hour be given to the consideration of such questions as these: What is there in this lesson for my class? How best illustrate this lesson? What story or poem will bring this lesson to the smaller ones? What difficulties met last Sunday? Sick? Absentees? Library? Finances? Recruits?

2. *Home Study.*—With the uniform topic and the teachers' meeting, this second great element in Sunday School preparation will be more likely to receive due attention. All educators are now agreed that the topical method is now the wisest way to read. Follow not a book but a subject in your reading, that a part at least of the home reading be in the direction of the Sunday School subject. Let it become the theme for table-talk, and the source of discussion with the children.

3. *Lesson Papers.*—The indispensable adjunct of adequate preparation, best used when used chiefly in preparation. Sunday Schools are in danger of receiving a hurt from too many and too good lesson papers. They are made substitutes for teachers, apologies for inadequate preparation on the part of the teacher. Let the teacher beware lest the lesson paper steps in between him and his class. Be jealous of your individuality. Beware of "middle-men" in Sunday School instruction. The best lesson paper is simply a fund of thought from which the teacher selects such as best serves his purpose. When thus used it is a stimulus, not a substitute for preparation.

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